

The Role of Arts in Education

Arts education helps build academic skills, increases academic performance, improves test scores, improves behavior, reaches kids at risk of dropping out of school, improves self-esteem and builds the kind of creative skills that are required of people in the workforce of the new century. **In a public opinion survey conducted by the California Arts Council, 100% of the random sample of 593 parents stated that the arts should be part of every child's school experience.**

FACTS

- **Arts Enhance Learning:** Numerous major studies show that learning and achievement are improved when the arts are an integral part of students' school and after/school experience. Engagement in the arts nurtures the development of cognitive, social, and personal competencies.
- **Process of Discovery:** The arts encourage learning as a process of discovery that engages the whole child – body, mind and heart -- in exploration and problem solving.
- **Language and Literacy:** Research powerfully details the effective use of drama in preschool and early grades as a technique for teaching and motivating children to develop higher-order language and literacy skills.
- **Arts Help Teachers Teach:** Studies of older children show that drama improves reading skills, persuasive writing ability, narrative writing skills, and children's self-conceptions as learners and readers.
- **Higher SAT Scores:** Students with four years of study in the arts scored higher on their SATs. In 1995, for example, SAT scores were 59 points higher on the verbal and 44 points higher on the mathematics portion than students with no course work in the arts.
- **Integrated curriculum & Test Scores:** At Los Angeles County's Fairgrove Academy, a K-8 school of 890 students, arts in the curriculum raised API scores from 480 to 670.
- **Attendance:** Attendance almost always goes up when arts are part of the curriculum, and remains stable.
- **Theater & At-Risk Youth:** Los Angeles Theater of Hearts provides at-risk students a theater curriculum exploring and building art skills through storytelling, to elevate self-esteem and encourage positive life goals. Expanded Artists in Schools programs for 289 high-risk youth at seven Alternative and Camp schools had these results: grades increased from 10% to 80%; attendance increased 80%; teamwork increased 100%.
- **Brain Development:** In musicians who started training in early childhood, the neural bridge that links the brain's hemispheres, called the corpus callosum, is up to 15% larger. A professional musician's auditory cortex - the part of the brain associated with hearing - contains 130% more gray matter than that of non-musicians.